

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Original) A method of nucleic acid transfer comprising the following steps (a) and (b):
  - (a) contacting a nucleic acid with a cell in a medium; and
  - (b) following the step (a), contacting the medium of (a) with a high-concentration solution of a metal salt.
2. (Original) The method of nucleic acid transfer according to claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid is a single-stranded DNA, a double-stranded DNA, a single-stranded RNA, a double-stranded RNA, an oligonucleotide or a ribozyme.
3. (Original) The method of nucleic acid transfer according to claim 2, wherein the double-stranded DNA or the double-stranded RNA is in the linear or cyclic form.
4. (Original) The method of nucleic acid transfer according to claim 3, wherein the cyclic double-stranded DNA is in the form of expression plasmid.
5. (Original) The method of nucleic acid transfer according to claim 2, wherein the oligonucleotide is a deoxyribonucleotide, a ribonucleotide, a phosphorothioate oligodeoxynucleotide, a 2'-O-(2-methoxy)ethyl-modified nucleic acid (2'-MOE-modified nucleic acid), a small interfering RNA (siRNA), a cross-linked nucleic acid (locked nucleic acid; LNA), a peptide nucleic acid (PNA) or a morpholino antisense nucleic acid.
6. (Currently amended) The method of nucleic acid transfer according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid is in the form of a complex or an inclusion body with a biodegradable substance or a living body-derived substance.

7. (Original) The method of nucleic acid transfer according to claim 6, wherein the living body-derived substance is atelocollagen.

8. (Currently amended) The method of nucleic acid transfer according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, wherein the concentration of the high-concentration solution of a metal salt to be contacted with the medium obtained in the step (a) is within the range of 0.1 M - 3.0 M.

9. (Original) The method of nucleic acid transfer according to claim 8, wherein the concentration of the high-concentration solution of a metal salt to be contacted with the medium obtained in the step (a) is within the range of 0.5 M - 2.0 M.

10. (Currently amended) The method of nucleic acid transfer according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 1, wherein the volume of the high-concentration solution of a metal salt to be contacted with the medium obtained in the step (a) is within the range of 1  $\mu$ L - 20  $\mu$ L per 500  $\mu$ L of the medium of step (a).

11. (Original) The method of nucleic acid transfer according to claim 10, wherein the volume of the high-concentration solution of a metal salt to be contacted with the medium obtained in the step (a) is within the range of 2  $\mu$ L - 10  $\mu$ L per 500  $\mu$ L of the medium of step (a).

12. (Currently amended) The method of nucleic acid transfer according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 11~~ claim 1, wherein the solution of a metal salt is a solution of a divalent metal chloride.

13. (Original) The method of nucleic acid transfer according to claim 12, wherein the solution of a divalent metal chloride is a solution of calcium chloride.

14. (Original) A nucleic acid transfer agent comprising a solid metal salt or a high-concentration solution of a metal salt as an ingredient.

15. (Canceled)
16. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid transfer agent according to claim 14 ~~or 15~~, wherein the concentration of the high-concentration solution of a metal salt is within the range of 0.1 M - 6.0 M.
17. (Original) The nucleic acid transfer agent according to claim 16, wherein the concentration of the high-concentration solution of a metal salt is within the range of 0.5 M - 4.0 M.
18. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid transfer agent according to ~~any one of claims 14 to 17~~ claim 14, wherein the metal salt is a chloride of divalent metal.
19. (Original) The nucleic acid transfer agent according to 18, wherein the chloride of a divalent metal is calcium chloride.
20. (Currently amended) A kit for nucleic acid transfer which comprises a nucleic acid transfer agent set forth in ~~any one of claims 14 to 19~~ claim 14.
21. (Currently amended) Use of a nucleic acid transfer agent or a kit set forth in ~~any one of claims 14 to 20~~ claim 14 in the nucleic acid transfer.